

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 256

JC 850 018

AUTHOR Miller, Dale A.; Hurley, John A.
TITLE An Experiment in Humanistic Management within
Community College District Twelve, Centralia/Olympia,
Washington.
INSTITUTION Community Coll. District Twelve, Centralia, WA.
PUB DATE 8 Oct 84
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Principles; *Administrator Evaluation;
*Administrator Qualifications; *Administrator
Selection; College Administration; Community
Colleges; Evaluation Criteria; Evaluation Methods;
*Leadership Styles; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Community College District Twelve WA

ABSTRACT

Community College District Twelve, a multi-college district serving a two-county area in southwestern Washington, has attempted to incorporate at administrative levels many of the humanistic, process-oriented principles of management discussed by Maslow and Maccoby. A concept of the ideal leadership style for District Twelve guides the selection process, evaluation, professional growth program and merit compensation for all administrators. Among the characteristics of the leadership styles that fit the District are an open door, encouraging access and free communication; a positive attitude; trust of fellow employees; and creative planning ability. The commitment in District Twelve to the ideal leadership style: (1) begins with the recruitment process, which relies heavily on extensive reference checks; (2) is reinforced through a merit evaluation process, which uses a survey feedback approach to obtain annual ratings of administrators by their peers, subordinates, and supervisor, as well as a goal-oriented evaluation process; and (3) is supported by a comprehensive professional development program growing out of the evaluation process. Though this experiment in humanistic management is still in its infancy in District Twelve, there are some preliminary indications that it is having a positive impact on administrative staff. (LAL)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED252256

An Experiment in Humanistic Management
Within Community College District Twelve
Centralia/Olympia, Washington

by
Dale A. Miller
District President

and

John A. Hurley
District Director of Personnel

October 8, 1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dale Miller

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

JC 850 018

An Experiment in Humanistic Management
Within Community College District Twelve
Centralia/Olympia, Washington

by
Dale A. Miller, District President
and
John A. Hurley, District Director of Personnel

As private and public organizations attempt to survive an ailing and unpredictable economy, leadership is being tested as perhaps never before. Increased competition in the national and international marketplace, volatile economic conditions and severe cutbacks in state and federal government spending increasingly require management of uncertainty and frequently of decline and retrenchment. Inevitably, this requires a reordering of priorities causing a predictable disruption of the established order, especially as worker layoffs mount.

However, even in the midst of these staggering adverse conditions, some leaders seem to have the uncanny knack of capturing new initiatives leading their organizations into a renewed sense of pride, purpose and vitality. In the private sector, the prime American example is the "new" Chrysler Corporation under the inspired leadership of their chief executive officer, Lee Iacocca. Chrysler's recovery truly has been one of the more remarkable stories in the history of American industry. Japan's counterpart has to be the Toyo Kogyo Company, manufacturers of Mazda motor cars, whose imaginative but initially defective Wankle rotary engines all but bankrupted the company a few years ago. Today they are among the more successful automobile manufacturers in the highly competitive Japanese auto industry.

But such success stories are rare exceptions, especially as the test of leadership centers increasingly on higher education and, more specifically, on the nation's community colleges. Even considering the campus unrest of the late '60s and early '70s, colleges have enjoyed relative stability since World War II. Now, times have changed. Faced with funding fits and starts and a confusing array of poor choices for solving complex problems, large numbers of community college administrators are becoming casualties of these tumultuous times.

But why? Many of these individuals are very able administrators whose management skills were developed in some of the finest colleges and universities in America. Until recent times, many administrators enjoyed long service at their institutions during the building and growing years. Now, in increasing numbers, they find themselves cast aside as they approach retirement.

The answer may well lie in the changing nature of the relationship between workers, the work place and changing expectations workers have for their employers.

During the 1960's Simon and Garfunkel composed and recorded the song, "I'd Rather be a Hammer than a Nail," paraphrased, "I'd Rather be a Cause than an Effect." Clearly, this attitude personified the rallying cry of the campus revolts of the 1960's which forever changed the views toward authority. Suddenly, it seemed, students refused to do what they were told if they happened to disagree with those in authority. Many in authority failed to recognize that this right, which seemed so outrageous and subversive at the time, was guaranteed by the Constitution. Remember the phrase "by the consent of the governed"? This change of attitude all but jarred the entire structure of the system and ultimately led to the conclusion of an unpopular war and the early retirement of one of the more powerful presidents.

What implications does this have for leadership? The harsh reality is that the system has produced a large cadre of able managers and administrators but precious few who are skilled enough to assume positions of leadership. We must be reminded that leaders cannot be designated or assigned the task of leadership. They can only be assigned positions within the organization which make the role of leader possible. In the final analysis only the followers can confer leadership based upon a trust relationship, carefully cultivated and nurtured through confidence, openness, honesty, a sense of common purpose and mutual respect. If that trust is shaken, the followers can, and frequently do, make nonleaders of leaders, sometimes in an instant. For whatever reason, once support is withdrawn and the bond of trust is destroyed it is all but impossible to restore.

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution in America, the prevailing management philosophy has been that since the profit and loss statement was the ultimate measure of productivity, it should logically follow that management be evaluated by the accomplishment of specified output measures - P & L. This is to be contrasted with the more "process" oriented contemporary management practices which are rapidly gaining worldwide popularity in both the private and public sectors. Simply stated, the process oriented philosophy holds that the way employers regard, motivate and organize the human resources in any organization ultimately determines the success or failure of that organization.

The Japanese seem to have captured the essence of "process" management, which is largely responsible for their phenomenal industrial achievements. Their management philosophy can be illustrated through the basic teachings of Zen Buddhism. The classic analogy in Zen is that of the ancient bowman who imagines the bow and the drawn arrow to be natural extensions of his own body in perfect harmony with nature. Placing that picture firmly in his mind, the bull's-eye is preordained, predictable, inevitable. Relating this concept to process management, if all the forces are brought to bear on tapping the full potential of human resources harmoniously within the organization then, and only then, will the purposes of the organization be achieved.

It is not difficult to understand why many American managers tend to resist this notion since many have been trained in power-based management. To involve the workers in the decision making process, which has traditionally been only in the manager's domain, is somehow viewed as compromising power. Antiquated attitudes, such as "familiarity breeds contempt," make it difficult for managers to get close to workers and for workers to get close to them. In the current scheme of things the "new leader" is one who is less power conscious and

less ego involved with the leadership position within the organization. As a result, we find leaders who are more acceptable, effective and secure. Leaders who are more secure and confident are better able to adapt their leadership styles to the personal needs of the employees. Those who are less secure convey a lack of personal confidence, tend to become threatened, and, in the final analysis, resort to traditional power plays to preserve their status.

In recent years a barrage of books and articles has been written in an attempt to explain the changing and complex relationship between management and labor, workers and bosses, and the expectations all people have for their jobs. Much of the interest in these relationships has undoubtedly been stimulated by the domination of Japanese competition in the world market.

The common theme throughout these publications and the current rhetoric is neither new nor complex. It is simply the rediscovery of some basic, universal principles of how human beings can and should relate to each other both on and off the job. One of the most enlightening teachers of this philosophy was Abraham Maslow, who is perhaps most noted for his works on self actualization and the hierarchy of human needs. But one of Maslow's greatest contributions to the understanding of the changing world of work is to be found in a deceptively simple article he wrote some twenty years ago in the Journal of Humanistic Research.¹ Maslow attempted to describe what people do to seek a rewarding personal experience and what they actively avoid to protect themselves psychologically and emotionally while preserving their sense of integrity and self worth.

Maslow reasoned that all people tend to:

Avoid

Being manipulated
Being dominated

Being determined by others

Being not respected
Being not taken seriously
Being regulated by others

Being controlled
Being screwed

Positively Seek

Being a prime mover
Being able to plan, carry
out, and to succeed
Success, prestige, respect,
dignity
Autonomy
Initiative
Fair acknowledgement of
our capabilities
Being a cause rather than
an effect

Maslow's reference to the tendency to avoid "being screwed" is particularly thought provoking. This can be interpreted as meaning that people are reluctant to invest their belief, loyalty and trust in an organization (or, for that matter, in a leader) only to become disappointed, disenchanted, and, in the final analysis, let down -- screwed. Once this occurs, it is very difficult to rebuild enthusiasm and a desire to once again put themselves out with a prospect only of more disappointments.

Using Maslow's principles as the basis for understanding the "new" revolution in the world of work, why are so many American managers seemingly

incapable of understanding or accepting the reality of this "revolutionary" thinking, which is rapidly becoming a dominant force in contemporary management theory in both private and public organizations throughout the world? Michael Maccoby, in his thought provoking book, The Leader,² explains this perplexing leadership problem which is having a deadening effect on many organizations which are unable to release the full potential of their human resources. Maccoby describes the concept of an identifiable "social character" within any organization or society; i.e., those values commonly held and subscribed to by the members. This social character is in a constant state of change and evolves with time and experience. The astute leader, according to Maccoby, is one who can recognize, appreciate and accommodate this value system whether directing a nation, a corporation, or any other organization that relies on people to get the job done.

Applying Maccoby's concept, new understandings can be gained by examining some of the classic matches and mismatches between leaders and the prevailing social character. For example, the spirit of the New Frontier under President John F. Kennedy clearly captured the values, dreams and aspirations of the American people in the early 1960's. Contrast that to the unfortunate mismatch between a resolute President Lyndon B. Johnson and the changing mood of the American people during the Vietnam War, with growing demands that the conflict be ended once it was perceived that Americans should no longer be involved and that the war could not end with a military victory.

In every organization there are endless examples of matches and mismatches of leadership styles. The current realities are that the management styles which were taught and practiced during the '50s, '60s and '70s simply will not work in the long-term as the year 2000 approaches. The prevailing value systems and attitudes of workers have changed significantly since that time and are continuing to change. Maccoby and other respected writers in the field are sending a message which must be heard!

Community College District Twelve, a multi-college district serving a two-county area in southwestern Washington, has attempted to incorporate at the administrative levels many of these humanistic process oriented principles. The following profile of the ideal leadership style for District Twelve details this commitment which guides the selection process, evaluation, professional growth program and merit compensation for all administrators:

Leadership Styles That Fit

Open door/visible, encouraging access and free communications
Positive/"can do" attitude
Potentializing personnel through encouragement and involvement
Is aware of the personal lives of coworkers

Leadership Styles That Do Not Fit

A stranger on campus, operating behind closed doors
Negative/"can't do" attitude
Turning off personnel through lack of acknowledgement, or undue criticism
"They are only employees who are paid to get the job done"

Leadership Styles That Fit

Trusting of fellow employees,
respecting their expertise
and delegating responsibility;
supporting them without
meddling as they carry out
their tasks

Optimism

Creative planning

Encourages new ideas

Team player

Loyal/mutually supportive

Constructive, direct
communication

Decisiveness - timely response
to needs, issues and problems

Local community oriented, with
involvement in community
affairs

A districtwide perspective
and orientation

Today and tomorrow centered

Trusting: Shared administration
through involvement and
persuasion

Flexibility

Leadership Styles That Do Not Fit

A one-person show, taking all the
credit and none of the blame

Pessimism/cynicism

"Getting by," Don't rock the boat

Hypercritical, negative and the first
one to shoot down any idea

Territorial empire building

"Poor mouther" or bystander

Destructive, grape-viner and
rumor-monger

"Ignore it and it will go away or
slip through the cracks"

Let somebody else handle the public
relations

Campus-centered, without due regard
or respect for the other campuses
of the district

Preoccupied with yesterdays, the good
and the bad

Power-brokering. "It's so because
I say it's so!"

Mind and feet in concrete

The commitment in Community College District Twelve to the ideal leadership style begins with the recruitment process, is reinforced through a merit evaluation, and supported by a comprehensive professional development program. The recruitment process, the evaluation, and professional development program are integrated with each other to provide the needed incentives to achieve and maintain the traits listed in the ideal leadership style.

In the past the administrative recruitment announcements of the district have included the traditional qualifications of a specified degree level and number of years of experience. While these qualifications remain an integral aspect of the selection process, another equally important dimension has been incorporated. Candidates are required to have formal administrative/management training, evidence of the ability to be humanistic and open in working with others, and demonstrated skills in verbal and written communication. These qualifications may be considered difficult to measure and ascertain, particularly in a "paper" screening. Experience has shown that while these qualifications are indeed difficult to determine from reading a resume, extensive reference checks provide verification of these dimensions. The thorough process of checking references has become more important than ever.

Obviously, simply requiring these additional qualifications does not guarantee that only administrators with the ideal leadership style will apply. We have discovered, however, that administrators with these traits are motivated to seek employment with our district. Experience shows that leaders who share this philosophy are attracted to an environment which complements their style. This recruitment process has resulted in the hiring of several new administrators who possess the administrative styles which promote this philosophy.

The administrative evaluation system is the most powerful tool to reinforce and provide feedback on how administrators are progressing towards a humanistic management style that "fits." The first phase of the evaluation uses a survey feedback approach which is closely allied with a theory of management developed by Rensis Likert called "System 4 Management."³ The survey feedback phase of the evaluation consists of twenty-one questions directly related to and designed to give feedback on those "leadership styles that fit" cited previously. One of those traits, as can be seen from the list, is the concept of encouraging new ideas. The question on the evaluation which corresponds to this trait is illustrated below:

EXTENT TO WHICH THIS ADMINISTRATOR ENCOURAGES NEW IDEAS

Very little encouraging of new ideas	Some encouraging of new ideas	Quite a bit of encouraging of new ideas	Almost always encouraging of new ideas

The survey feedback approach is process oriented; i.e., annually, all administrators are rated by a sampling of subordinates, peers, and their supervisor on traits that "fit" such as trust, communication, teamwork, and encouraging new ideas as illustrated above. All of these traits relate directly to the profile of "styles that fit." The administrator and immediate supervisor mutually agree upon those individuals who will serve as evaluators. Once administered, these evaluations are then averaged and given to the administrator as one evaluation document. Comments from the various evaluators are included. This has proven to be one of the most valuable aspects of this part of the evaluation. It should be emphasized that all responses are confidential and are personally compiled and synthesized by the supervisor.

The second phase of the evaluation is goal oriented and consists of each individual administrator setting measurable goals with their supervisor. There is an effort made to encourage administrators to not only exert influence over their individual goals but over organizational goals as well. Research conducted by D. C. Pelz (1952) concluded that the ability to influence outcomes at higher levels in the organization positively affects morale and motivation and consequently productivity.⁴ The goal setting process at District Twelve involves the Board setting districtwide goals using feedback from the district and college presidents, who have met with administrators both as individuals and as a group. In this manner the flow of communication upward within the organization is facilitated. Goals are then established early in the year by the Board of Trustees at its annual workshop. In the past, these goals

have been set a year at a time. However, recognizing the need for "future" planning, beginning next year, this process will include long range planning, reflecting local demographic, economic, political and cultural trends in our service areas.

Based on the Board's priorities the colleges within Community College District Twelve set organizational goals and operational objectives which will accomplish the priorities set by the Board after considering feedback. In turn, each administrator sets goals with appropriate operational objectives which assist the organization in fulfilling its mission. The administrators, having had input into the organizational goals, have an increased ownership in the goal setting process. The process itself provides for a unified effort on the part of the Board, presidents, and administrators in achieving planned goals. This is important for administrators since their salary increases are related to the achievement of their annual goals.

To maintain and improve upon an effective leadership style, each administrator annually prepares a professional development plan which is a direct outgrowth of the evaluation process. Based upon the results of the process oriented evaluation and the progress made toward accomplishing goals, the administrator and supervisor outline, in writing, a plan for professional improvement and development. This plan may address the need for training in a specific area or it may concentrate on strengthening general leadership skills. Individual administrators are responsible for carrying out professional development plans with the support of supervisors. Financial assistance is available to each administrator to help defray tuition and seminar fees. Additionally, release time from daily administrative responsibilities is available, subject to the recommendations of the administrative professional growth committee.

The evaluation system and professional development plan were developed by committees composed of administrators who were to be directly affected by this process. These committees, through frequent meetings with all administrators, encouraged significant input and feedback on the plans as they were developed. This approach to developing an evaluation system and professional development plan allowed Community College District Twelve administrators to have a voice in the process and, as a result, they have ownership in the results.

This experiment in humanistic management is still in its infancy in Community College District Twelve, so at this stage it is too early to determine whether or not this approach is successful by any quantitative measure. There are, however, preliminary indications that it is having an impact on the administrative staff, suggested by:

- (1) An apparent match between this philosophy, which is detailed in administrative job announcements, and candidates seeking administrative positions within the district. A conscious attempt is made to discourage applicants who are not committed to this approach to leadership.
- (2) The administrative evaluation process, which applies to all administrative staff within the district, graphically focuses on specific areas of strength and weakness as reported by

the evaluator group. This is particularly helpful to supervisors who have the responsibility to work with their administrators in developing corrective programs where weaknesses exist.

- (3) The overall district and college planning efforts have become more meaningful since the achievement of goals and objectives is an important component in the evaluation process.

Humanistic management practices are reinforced through the thoughtful integration, coordination and articulation of the administrative selection processes, evaluation, professional development and merit pay compensation. This total institutional commitment has the effect of a constant reinforcement of this philosophy.

In the final analysis no administrator or, for that matter, no organization "arrives" as far as humanistic management practices are concerned. It requires constant encouragement, development and support since it is dependent upon human beings to carry it out, human beings who are constantly undergoing change and who are subject to pressures, trials and tribulations. What is most important, however, is that every effort is exhausted to provide conditions in which the full potential of the human resources within the organization can be tapped, released and nurtured. This requires an environment of mutual trust, mutual support and a recognition of the worth and dignity of each individual within the organization.

¹ Abraham H. Maslow. "Further Notes on the Psychology of Being," Journal of Humanistic Research, Spring 1963, Vol. 3, No. 122

² Michael Maccoby, The Leader, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981, p. 17

³ Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., Organizational Development, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1978, pp. 152-158

⁴ D. C. Pelz, "Influence: A Key to Effective Leadership in the First-Line Supervisor," Personnel, November 1952, pp. 3-11